

Serial No. 10/770,928, filed 2/3/04

Amendments to Specification:

Please add the following paragraph to the beginning of the application as follows:

[.05] This application is a Divisional of United States Patent Application Serial Number 09/940,106, filed August 27, 2001, Patent Number 6,701,763.

Please amend paragraph 1 as follows:

- [1] This invention relates to an axle assembly, and more particularly, ~~the invention relates~~ to a hydroformed axle with a bearing shoulder and brake flange that are secured thereto preferably without the use of welds.

Please amend paragraph 2 as follows:

- [2] Many prior art axle assemblies, such as for use in trucks or trailers, are constructed from tubes or solid members that are straight or bent to a desired shape. Numerous components are typically secured to the axle, typically by welding the axle component to the axle. For example, the brake assembly is supported on the axle by a brake flange, which is welded to the axle. Welding components to the axle requires that a consumable welding material be deposited on the brake component and axle in a relatively precise manner. As a result, the welding process may be expensive and difficult to control.

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Please amend paragraph 3 as follows:

- [3] The wheels are supported on the ends of the axle on bearing assemblies. Bearing races are pressed onto the axle to abut a shoulder, (which may be machined onto the axle), to locate the bearings axially. Machining can be a relatively expensive process. ~~therefore~~ Therefore, what is needed is an axle assembly on which a bearing shoulder may be provided, and to which a brake flange may be secured, to without the use of expensive machining or welding.

Please amend paragraph 4 as follows:

- [4] The present invention provides an axle assembly including a tubular member having an outer wall and an interior cavity. The ~~ether~~ outer wall includes a first interlocking feature. An axle component mounting member, such as a bearing shoulder sleeve and/or a brake flange, is arranged on a portion of the outer wall. The mounting member includes a second interlocking feature coacting with the first interlocking feature to affix the mounting member and tubular member to one another. The axle assembly may be formed by arranging the ~~axle~~ mounting member into a die assembly. A tubular member may be arranged in the die assembly within an opening in the mounting member. A hydroforming process may be employed to pressurize a cavity within the tubular member. A portion of the tubular member is deformed into engagement with the mounting member to affix the mounting member to the tubular member.

Please amend paragraph 5 as follows:

- [5] Accordingly, the above invention provides an axle assembly on which a bearing shoulder may be provided and to which a brake flange may be secured ~~to~~ without the use of expensive machining or welding.

Please amend paragraph 11 as follows:

- [11] Figure 5A is a partial cross-sectional view of one embodiment of the interlocking features taken along ~~line 5-5~~ lines 5A-5B of Figure 3; and

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Please amend paragraph 12 as follows:

- [12] Figure 5B is a partial cross-sectional view of another embodiment of the interlocking features taken along ~~line 5-5~~ lines 5B-5B of Figure 3.

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